



For Immediate Release
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Office of the Healthcare Advocate Recovers \$8.5 Million for Healthcare Consumers in Fiscal Year 2015

Connecticut healthcare consumers reaped more than \$8.53 million dollars in savings during fiscal year 2015, according to a report released today by Victoria Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate. The Office of Healthcare Advocate (OHA) is an independent state agency that assists consumers with health plan education and appeals. The \$8.53 million represents the costs of healthcare services, procedures and claims that would have been borne directly by consumers, had the agency not intervened.

OHA's model includes direct intervention via advocacy with health plans on denials of coverage for medical necessity, experimental/investigational status, and non medical necessity issues such as unwarranted billing actions or coding errors and non covered services determinations. OHA works **solely** on health issues, and its consumer recovery total reflects savings from intervention in fully-insured and self-funded health plans.

The \$8.53 million savings total includes OHA's successful appeals of complex medical and brain health treatment denials of medically necessary inpatient psychiatric care for adolescents and several complex medical cases.

Veltri noted with pride and praise for her staff that the savings total for fiscal year 2015 remains high despite the dramatic number of cases in which the OHA has provided solely education and counseling to consumers. In the fourth quarter of FY 2015, OHA opened **3005 cases, *the highest number of opened cases in a single quarter since OHA began operations in 2001.*** The highest number of referrals to OHA was for enrollment and eligibility issues related to coverage and appeals for Access Health CT and Medicaid.

OHA conducted 758 outreach and education events in FY 2015; 329 of the events focused on the work of the Behavioral Health Clearinghouse, established under PA 14-115.

OHA issued its [Report on Fiscal Year 2015 Activities](#) detailing the extensive work of the office beyond traditional case work, including publication of an OHA newsletter and summaries of OHA's legislative activities and stakeholder collaborations.

Veltri said, "Healthcare consumers, providers, businesses, state agencies and legislators turn to OHA for trusted and real time advocacy. Healthcare is evolving rapidly, and the demand for the kind of services we provide, which range from real time consumer education and assistance in

selecting a plan to enrollment and eligibility assistance to direct advocacy in the grievance and appeal processes rose again in FY 2015.”

“As our feedback survey results continue to show, our clients consistently praise the OHA staff for the expert and timely advocacy they provide. Our feedback surveys show that 94% of people who come to OHA would refer a family or friend to us for help.

“OHA will continue to play a key role in outreach, education and advocacy for new enrollees in healthcare coverage in addition to our continuing role in advocating for consumers in medical necessity and billing disputes and systemic healthcare issues in Connecticut.”

Consumers who need assistance can call 1-866-466-4446, or e-mail OHA at healthcare.advocate@ct.gov.

For general information, Veltri recommends that consumers visit OHA at www.ct.gov/oha, at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/State-of-Connecticut-Office-of-the-Healthcare-Advocate/301102456997?ref=hl> and on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/stateofctoah>.

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